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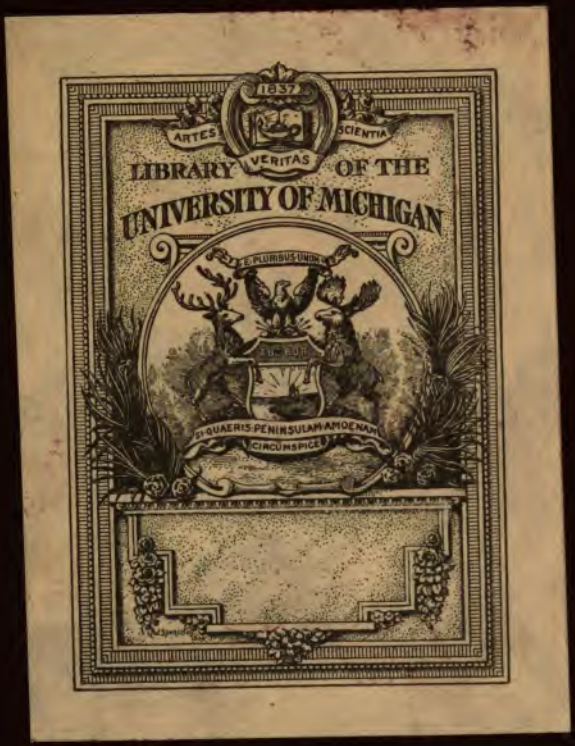

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NARRAGANSETT BALLADS

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WITH

SONGS AND LYRICS

BY

CAROLINE HAZARD

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1894

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THE DEDICATION

My thoughts like birds come flying,
From east and west they come,
And song to song replying
They flutter round their home.

Dear home where dwelt my fathers,
Dear Heart who art its sun!
Round thee the song all gathers
And ends where it begun.

Oakwoods, in PEACE DALE, R. I.
October, 1894.

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NARRAGANSETT BALLADS.

THE GREAT SWAMP FIGHT.

A WATCHING WARRIOR.

1675.

Blow, blow, thou south wind, blow,
And break the bands of frost!
Our island stands secure;
And not one craven soul
Can cross the dreadful swamp,
Or crawl through all the roots,
If but the south wind blow
And break the bands of frost!

The palisade is strong,
The corn in plenty piled,
The wigwams tightly built,
With wood to warm them well.
Our women with their babes
Are busied baking cakes;
The warriors all are here
And wear the signs of war,
With arrows strong and swift,
Sound wood, and tipt with stone —
The black the Pequoits use,

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And bone too strong to break,
And Narragansett quartz,
Bound round its narrow neck
With thongs so soft and strong,
Which our wise squaws can cut
From tender hides of deer.
Doubled the deadly pack
Each warrior has to-day,
For this is war — we wait
For victory, or for death.

Hark, hark! a sound of steps?
Ah no, 't is but a sough,
A whisper of the wind
That sighs and softly wails.
Oh, blow, thou south wind, blow,
And break the bands of frost!

My mother knew these men;
With welcome free and full
She gave them of her corn;
She carried clams to them
And gave them of her best.
But she were better dead
Than show them such good will,
For soon she bore a son,
The scorn of all the tribe!
They settled here, and then
There came men with a coat,
The thing which these men cast
About them in the cold.

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The thing was fine to see,
With yellow stuff tricked out,
And shining yellow spheres
Ran up and down the front;
Really the coat was rare.
Some pieces, too, they brought,
Bright shining as the bay
In sunlight when it lies
Upon the lapping wave.
And papers, too, they brought,
A present they proposed.
Our chiefs agreed full well,
Their gift was choice; by chance
The papers were a part.
They put their signs all down,
The arrow, and the bird,
And all that appertains
To show how great they are.
Now is their greatness gone!
For straight our lands were seized,
The lands tilled by our squaws,
The best of all for corn —
And strange beasts, too, they brought;
And turned it upside down.
Not small the cornstalks then;
But when we claimed a share,
They said we sold the lands.
Sell land! How could we sell
What surely no man owns!
The land lay there, good land,
Land fit to nourish corn

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Which nourished all the tribe.
And now they say, no more
Your squaws may till the fields,
Nor fill the baskets full
With ears of golden corn!

But worse than stealing land,
They soon stole wife and child;
And to their service pressed
Our slender maids, and squaws
Wise in the ways of work —
And men to build them walls —
Until our warriors bold
Would burdens bear no more!
Ah, what a night was that,
The cold, the black, the still!
How fierce the fire burned
When fell the roof-tree in —
And how with shriek on shriek
The women screamed for life!
Ha, that was goodly work
To glut a gallant heart!
Revenge they seek, revenge,
But ruin we have wrought,
A ruin on the hill,
The highest house of all!

The night is black and cold,
Breathing a bitter breath.
No sound, no sign of wind,
The frozen swamp lies hard

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As rock, along the shore,
Where all should be soft marsh.
The cedar trees stand stiff,
The birches spectre white;
The water makes no sound, —
No moon until the morn.
Asleep the warriors all,
Women and wailing babes
Wrapt in the cold. Secure
They rest, and soundly sleep.
But should the English come,
Straight through the frozen swamp
Their horses and their men
Unharmed could hold their way.
That were a ghastly fight
For gain and glory then!
But better wait awhile
Till breaks the bitter frost,
And black roots stretching deep
Are snares to snare them all.
Then easy were our prey,
As plunging in the peat
Man after man stuck fast!

But now these many days
The swamp is frozen hard,
Nor sun can make it soft.
Ho! spirits of the air,
Arise and come to aid,
And blow, thou south wind, blow,
And break the bands of frost!

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THE TALE OF THE FIGHT.

1675.

I.

Oh, rouse you, rouse you, men at arms,
And hear the tale I tell,
From Pettaquamscut town I come,
Now hear what there befell.

The houses stand upon the hill,
Not large, each house is full,
But largest of them all there stood
The house of Justice Bull.

'T was there the court sat every year,
The governor came in state,
From there the couriers through the town
Served summons soon and late.

And there, 't is but three years agone,
George Fox preached, you remember;
That was in May when he preached peace,
And now it is December.

Peace, peace, he cried, but righteous God
How can there be true peace,
When war and tumult stalk at night,
And deeds of blood increase?

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Revenge, revenge, good captains bold,
Revenge, my people cry;
Where stood the house of Justice Bull
But piled up ashes lie.

How fared it then, who may dare tell?
The shutters barred the light,
As one by one the windows closed,
And all was black as night.

Strong was the house, and strong brave men
All armed lay down to sleep,
And women fair, and children, too,
They were to guard and keep.

And then a horror in the night,
And shouts, and fire, and knives,
And demons yelling in delight,
As men fought for their lives.

And where there stood that goodly house
And lived those goodly men,
Full seven goodly souls are gone,
Revenge, we cry again!

II.

Up, up, ye men of English blood!
The gallant governor cried,
And we shall dare to find their lair,
Where'er it be they hide.

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For never men of English blood
Could brook so foul a deed,
For all these sins the fierce red skins
Shall reap their lawful meed.

Up rose the little army then,
All armed as best they could,
With pike and sword and axes broad,
Flint-locks and staves of wood.

And motley was the company,
Recruits from wood and field,
But strong young men were with them then,
Who 'd sooner die than yield.

Connecticut had sent her men
With Major Robert Treat;
Each Colony in its degree
Sent in its quota meet.

And Massachusetts led the way,
And Plymouth had next post,
Winslow commands the gathered bands,
A thousand men they boast.

The winter sun hung in the sky
And frost bound all things fast;
As they set forth, from out the north,
There blew a bitter blast.

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The meadow grass was stiff with rime,
The frozen brook lay dead;
Like stone did sound the frozen ground
Beneath the martial tread.

All day they marched in bitter cold,
And when, as fell the night,
They reached the hill and gazed their fill
Upon the piteous sight,

No need to urge the rapid chase,
The cinders did that well,
And in the air a woman's hair
Told more than words could tell.

In stern resolve they lay them down,
For rest they needed sore,
But long e'er dawn the swords were drawn
And open stood the door.

Out to the gloom of morning passed
Full silently those men,
And what 'twixt light and fall of night
Should come, no soul might ken.

III.

They turned their faces toward the west,
The morning air was cold,
And softly stepped, while still men slept,
With courage high and bold.

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An Indian they met ere long,
'T was Peter, whom they knew;
They asked their way, naught would he say,
To his own comrades true.

In anger cried the governor:
Then let the man be hung,
For he can tell, he knows full well,
So let him find his tongue.

To save his life that wretched man
Agreed to be their guide,
As they marched on, the Indian
Marched onward by their side.

And soon they reached a dreadful swamp,
With cedar trees o'ergrown,
And thick and dark with dead trees stark
And great trunks lying prone.

'T was frozen hard, and Indians there!
They fired as they ran,
And with a bound that spurned the ground,
The fierce assault began.

And then a wonder in the wood, —
A little rising ground,
With palisade for shelter made
Of timber planted round.

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And but one place of entrance there
Across a watery way,
A tall felled tree gave access free,
From shore to shore it lay.

Full many a gallant man that day
His life left at that tree,
The bravest men pressed forward then,
And there fell captains three.

A dreadful day, and of our men
Short work would have been made,
But that by grace they found a place
Weak in the palisade.

Then they poured in, within the fort
Soon filled with Indians dead,
And many a one great deeds had done,
Within that place of dread.

Then with a torch the whole was fired,
The wigwams caught the blaze,
The fire roared and spread abroad
And fed on tubs of maize.

The night came on, the governor called,
The soldiers gathered round;
The fort was theirs, and dying prayers
Were rising from the ground.

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With care they gathered up their dead,
The few who had been spared,
All through the cold, in pain untold,
To Warwick they repaired.

So was the Indians' power gone,
Avenged were Englishmen,
For from the night of that Swamp fight
They never rose again.

In Narragansett there was peace,
The soldiers went their way,
All that remains are some few grains
Of corn parched on that day.

Gone is the wrong, the toil, the pain,
The Indians, they are gone.
Please God we use, and not abuse
The land so hardly won!

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A SURVIVOR.

1725.

FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE GREAT SWAMP FIGHT.

HEAP high the wood, how cold it grows to-night!
With silent icy breath the night creeps in,
Till shivers shake the very soul of me.
There, that 's a ruddy blaze. And thou, dear lad,
Hast thou thy netting there? The fish-net strong
To catch the flat fish with, or creeping crabs
On Pettaquamscut shore? What fighters they!
Each seizes on his fellow with his claws
And fiercely pulls and tugs with all his might,
As if one boiling pot was not for all.
Cold, cold, my son, and colder grows my heart,
This black cold winter night, and I thank God
Thou hast no blood of mine to chill thy veins,
Dear youth, who yet art dear as any son.

The fire lights the room well, does it not?
I see thy face with questions in thine eyes.
Yes, 't was Friend Collins came to-day in truth,
And with him neighbor Perry, good men both;
And last week came the young man from St. Paul's,
A fair young man, and earnest, who speaks well.
I went there, that is true, a month ago,
And made but little of his services,

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With standings up, and sittings down, and prayers
Writ in a book; the Spirit moves not so.
Yet comfortable words they were I heard,
With exhortations to confess. I sat,
And did not stir with all the crowd. 'T is true
I did remove my hat, for all men did.
And when the preacher stopped I came away.
Last week he came to see me, for he marked
My face, he said, and told me had I aught
Upon my mind 't were best to make clean breast;
His church allowed such comfort, so he said,
And he was clothed with all authority
To hear in case of need. Kindly he spoke —
A good young man, in truth. But I replied, —
Not so George Fox said, I have heard him preach;
And each man hath a teacher in himself,'
He said, to tell him what is right and wrong.
Confession to a man cannot avail.
If I have aught that preys upon my mind,
The Light of Truth within me will direct
What I must do.

To-day the good Friends came,
Appointed by the Meeting to enquire
Wherefore I joined in worship in so far
As to remove my hat in St. Paul's church.
Thou, who art held in honor of us all
Shouldst set example, so they sternly said.
If thou hast aught to question or inquire,

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Seek not for further light in unknown ways,
But lay thy case before the Meeting here,
Which will appoint good men to counsel thee.
I kindly thanked them, for they meant me well,
And wrote a paper of acknowledgment
Of my offense in taking off my hat,
And going to strange houses on first days.
So well content they parted from me then.

Put on more wood, dear lad, 't is colder now;
Or is it I am grown so old to-night,
More old than all my years, for in new lands
Time takes a heavy tribute of man's life, —
Or is it that these good enquiring Friends
Have stirred the well of sombre discontent,
The grief and shame that lie deep in my heart,
Which I have never breathed to mortal man?
Not to confess I dare — but yet the tale
May warn thy youth, nor alienate thy love,
My boy with clearest eyes, my Rachael's son.
Thy netting grows apace, the fire burns,
I 'll try to tell it all.

Oft hast thou heard
Of Justice Bull who lived upon the hill,
And built the goodly house. I 've showed thee oft
Foundation stones, where they are standing yet.
I was his servant, as thou knowest too,
Indentured servant, which was but to say

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He was my master till I came of age.
A kind and generous master, too, he was.
And for my mistress, how I loved her well!
From eight years old I knew no other care;
In childish sickness she was my dear nurse,
My mistress too, whose word must be obeyed,
But gentle in her ways, with dignity
And sweetness such as never woman had.
And to this house George Fox came, and he preached
Of peace, and meekness, patience under wrong.
I heard him preach, and saw his saintly face.
And after he was gone the men discussed
His doctrine. I was but the lad who served
And brought the mugs of cider and the rum,
But I had eager ears and listened too.
And one said: What, have patience under wrong
And not defend our rights! The world would turn
And all things have an end if one submits
To impositions or to injuries!
My right arm shall defend whate'er I have.
And mine! another cried. And then a third:
Nay, nay, said he, you see not what he means,
One wrong can never right another wrong —
Bear witness to the wrong, but suffer it,
So shall it die, nor sin beget again
A sinful progeny which but increase
And fill the world with tumult and with crime.
And so they talked the while I passed the cups;
And each man unconvinced went to his home.

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That was in seventy-two. The time sped on,
The days grew troublous. Indians would not work.
A muttering of war came from the north.
We thought ourselves secure, nor dreamed of harm,
And one cold winter's night all went to rest.
I barred the windows as I always did,
My master and the mistress barred their door —
Their room beside the great room where they sat.
The children slept, the boys of six and eight,
And with her in her room the cradle stood.
A still cold night, with sigh of rising wind —
Cold, like to-night, which brings it all to mind.
I, too, crept to my couch, a trundle bed
Pulled out, and placed before the kitchen fire —
The attic was too cold on such a night.
I know not just how long I slept. I woke
With sense of some one moving, very near.
How still! And then a crackle not like frost.
And then a flickering light that blazed up high
Which gleamed in through the holes the shutters had.
I started up, my master, too, was up.
We looked out through the chinks into the night
And saw black shapes that softly crept up close,
With torches in their hands, close to the house.
We called the men, and quickly got our guns.
And with the first report as one man fell

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Arose a fearful yell, like growl of dogs
And shrieks of frantic women all in one.
My master even paled, so many there.
And then the fray began. The fire-brands flew,
Up to the roof they flew, while creeping shapes
Came close beneath the shutters to the house
And beat upon the doors to break them in.
My master called the men, directed them.
Look to thy mistress, boy, he cried to me.
Up to the roof he climbed. One went below
To where the well was sunk beneath the floor,
Quickly the bucket filled, and passed it up.
The house was strong, no fear except from fire;
The shutters oak, the bars were made so stout
No fear they would break in, but fire might drive
Us forth, to certain terror and to death.
My mistress stood, the infant in her arms,
The boys clung to her skirts, the room was dark,
Except a brazen gleam between the cracks
Of window shutters flung across the room.
And fearful sounds there were which pierced the night.
We stood in silence listening to the shrieks.
A shade appeared, and in the room a yell!
I saw the infant seized, heard horrid sounds,
The children screamed but once, but once they cried,
And then again that sound of awful blow!
"Jahleel!" my mistress cried, "Jahleel, Jahleel!"

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And I stood still! A horror froze my limbs,
A blackness bound my eyes. I tell thee, boy,
I was afraid. Yea, coward, caitiff, fool
And traitor, — all thy blazing eyes can say, —
I was all that. Afraid, afraid was I,
For what? For my own paltry useless life
Which then God gave me for my punishment.
I saw the other deed, nor moved a hand,
No soul knew I was there. Now first I speak
After these many years, through which, at times,
The recollection comes to torture me.
However I escaped I know not well.
There lay my mistress, dead, and there her boys,
And still her cry for help rang in my ears.
'T is true I joined the army in the fight
And fought my way with others through the camp,
And many an Indian soul to judgment went
Sent by my hand. They called me brave, indeed;
And would have made me captain of the band, —
Me, me, who was a coward and a fool!

And then once more came peace and quiet days.
We worked and tilled the fields, I ploughed the land
And built this little house, my freedom earned
Ere yet I was of age. I would have wed;
Thy mother was my friend, thou knowest well.
But each time I would speak, my mistress' voice

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Rang in my ears. "Jahleel, Jahleel!" she cried,
And I, who could not guard her in her need,
Dared not to ask a woman for her love.
So slipped she from me, by another won.

Then I began to justify myself.
Endure, endure, George Fox said, suffer wrong,
And I had suffered it if any has.
So then I joined the meeting on the hill,
And found external peace for many years.
But all the time I knew that my poor peace
Was founded on a lie, it could not last.
Truly I suffered wrong, and passive stood,
But not from courage, not from self-control.
It was that I was paralyzed by fear.
Bear witness to the wrong, George Fox had said,
But there I stood, and saw it all, nor tried
To help or succor them in any way,
And so their death lies heavy on my head.
I was partaker in that dreadful deed —
Aye, I, who loved her, helped to slay her then.
That is the truth, which when I plainly saw,
I then began to preach — of love I preached,
Of penitence, of purity, of death.
Men said, he hath the spirit of George Fox,
Which gives him such humility and power.
They little knew what reasons good I had
To call myself the chief of sinners all!

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This is my life, and I have told it thee,
Dear lad, who art too young to understand.
But this thou mayest know, though all the rest,
The sorrow, the remorse, the sense of guilt
Be far from thee forever, dearest boy.
Think thoughts of truth, be brave, keep honor bright,
Lest in some sudden crisis of thy life,
When action springs instinctive without thought,
The flower of thy life, thy heart's best fruit,
Prove but a rotten hideous thing in fact.
So live that in some moment such as mine
Thou shalt not fail as I did, to my shame.
Live high, think truth, make hand obey thy will
And keep thy will obedient unto God.

How still the fire burns, 't is warmer now —
The wind more gently blows. Go bar the door —
Hearken ; a cry ? Yea, and I know it well !
Thou canst not hear it, boy : Jahleel, it calls !
My mistress' voice, not warningly this time ;
She softly calls, and bids me come to her.
My dearest mistress, dost thou then forgive ?
Then may I trust my gracious Lord and thine
Hath taken away my stain, my shame is gone !
Thou with the brave and valiant heart, dear boy,
Shalt take my life up where I lay it down.

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A NARRAGANSETT TRAGEDY.

THE CRYING BOG.

THE sun sinks slowly to the west,
The night comes veiled in fleecy mist;
It rolls across the ocean's breast,
Each swelling wave is lightly kissed,
It pauses at the sunlit land,
Then softly covers sea and strand.

Beside the Pettaquamscut shore,
Beneath the shadow of the hill,
A traveler passes, and once more
Looks toward the mist so white and still.
With hurried steps his way he makes
Among the rushes and the brakes.

His foot is on the oozy marsh,
He backward starts in wild affright, —
Above his head he hears the harsh,
Strange cry of hawks: down comes the night;
The whispering rushes bode of ill;
Down comes the night, soft, pale, and chill.

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Sudden he hears from out the dark
A baby's cry. Poor little child,
What does it here? Again, and hark,
The cry is clear, and strong, and wild;
Some frightened child is surely near,
A child who cries a cry of fear.

He plunges onward through the reeds,
Relief and succor fain would bring —
The fog is thick, but some one needs;
He strives to find the suffering thing.
Though beast or bird, his manly breast
Would give it shelter, warmth, and rest.

Lo, on the bare and humid ground
A woman crouches, dark of face;
An Indian woman: all unbound,
Her black hair falls in maiden grace;
Her ghastly looks are wan and wild,
Beside her lies a new-born child.

The baby cries its plaintive cry,
The mother answers with a groan;
Recoils in terror, then draws nigh,
And lifts the child with sobbing moan.
She drags her wearied limbs with pain,
The baby cries its cry again.

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She feebly hastens toward the shore,
With horror scans her baby's face.
Then hastens faster than before —
The child is of an alien race.
They reach the marsh, the water 's nigh,
The baby cries its plaintive cry.

The traveler shudders, strives to run,
His spell-bound feet his will refuse.
This dreadful deed must not be done,
His muscles tense he cannot use.
He strives to give a warning cry —
He utters it, a voiceless sigh.

Alone he sees the dreadful deed:
Far in the marsh the child is thrown;
Caught in strange spell, he cannot plead,
And now the mother stands alone
In solitude, despair, and shame,
In wretchedness without a name.

Men call the place the Crying Bog,
And hasten by its tangled reeds;
When night comes veiled in fleecy fog
The ghostly child for pity pleads —
The child whose voice can never die,
Whose only life is in its cry.

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PEAKÈD ROCK.

SEPTEMBER night, with struggling moon,
And mist that shifts, and sinks, and whirls,
And darkness coming all too soon,
And tender ferns, which sharp frost curls;
And phantom shape inclosed in fog —
A woman at the Crying Bog!

She hears the cry; she kneels, she cries
Before her cry the voice is dumb,
She spreads her arms, again she tries,
She prays the answering voice to come;
But silence falls on all around,
There is no voice, no faintest sound.

She beats her breast with hollow blows,
Then hurries from the dreadful place,
Her black hair round her wildly flows
And covers all her weeping face;
The fog in pity shuts her in,
And hides her from her mortal sin.

On, on she speeds, o'er bog and field
With giant boulders thickly set,
She slips and falls, but will not yield,
She hastens on, in fog and wet;
The baby's cry is in her ears,
It fills her with a thousand fears.

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At last she wins the ocean's shore —
A great expanse of dusky gray
In motion with a moaning roar
And dashing on the rocks its spray.
Oh, welcome sound, its sobbing moan
Drowns out the baby's piercing tone.

It is so vast, so great, so strong,
Beneath its fleecy cloud of mist,
How restful is its sobbing song
To ears which ever, as they list,
For years have heard beneath the fog
The baby of the Crying Bog.

She creeps down to the water's edge —
How soft it breaks upon the rocks,
And gently covers all the ledge
With foam as soft as maiden's locks;
It spreads a bed of softest down,
White, cool, and fair, all care to drown.

How white, how soft! With spell-bound gaze
The woman stands; there is no sound.
How soft, how white! For many days
She 's wandered and no rest has found.
A look of peace comes in her face,
That gives her back her maiden grace.

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And then, upon the foamy bed,
A sudden space of blackness comes.
An instant only: overhead
The moon looks out; her gaze benumbs —
The white wave slowly creeping on —
An instant more, all trace is gone.

But lo, up from the water rose
A giant rock, and stood upright;
The angry waves beat it with blows,
And on it wasted all their might;
But there it stood in wind and wave,
To mark that lonely woman's grave.

The Peakèd Rock, they called it then:
Long stood it there, for many a year;
None saw it rise, and none knew when
The giant rock would disappear.
It went at last; and some will say
A soul was purged from sin that day.

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PETTAQUAMSCUT MARSH.

THE tide was out at set of sun,
  The black marsh shone with gleams of red;
A little island stood alone,
  But smoke curled up, a slender thread;
Some man lived on this lonely place,
But bats and owls to see his face.

A lonely place, half hut, half cave,
  Plastered with mud and built of stone,
Just out of reach of high-tide wave,
  And there a hermit dwelt alone;
Shell-fish and herbs supplied his store,
He bowed beneath his years threescore.

There sat he, withered, bowed and old,
  And shivered o'er his scanty blaze.
Upon his coat a gleam of gold
  Bespoke its early better days,
And golden lilies of fair France, —
The old man sat as in a trance.

He saw, and naught else could he see,
  A face, an Indian maiden's face,
This was the place, and he was free,
  And she the fairest of her race.

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He played a game, she lost her whole,
He gave a kiss and she — her soul.

•

He wandered lightly through the world
And fought and laughed through many a fight.
Where'er the French flag was unfurled
There would he seek some new delight.
But still beneath his careless grace
He saw that Indian maiden's face.

This was the place, 't was here, 't was here!
Great God, is that a baby's cry?
He trembles with a sudden fear,
He starts and gasps convulsively,
Then hastens through the night winds harsh,
And gropes his way down to the marsh.

The marsh seems firm, the tide is out,
And black and darksome is the night;
The cry leads on with answering shout,
He hastens on with all his might.
If he could succor this poor child
Perchance his fate would be more mild.

And on, and on, an endless waste —
The night is black — no one to see —
Whose child? whose child? in frenzied haste
He stumbles on, it may not be —
His youth comes back, and by his side
There is a face — his Indian bride.

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The tide was out, the night was black,
The marsh was soft, and on he sped
With searching gaze that ne'er looked back,
And knew not that he chased the dead.
When morning came all trace was gone,
The little island stood alone.

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DOROTHY'S HOLLOW.

SEVENTEEN hundred and eighty! They say
Never was known so bitter a year.
The sea was frozen in the bay,
From Bonnet Point to Beaver Tail
The ice was so thick that never a sail
Sailed the passage for many a day.
A year to remember with dread and fear —
The snow a heavy blanket lay
And covered the woodlands brown and sear;
And the roads were lost, and the stone walls gone.
And still the snow kept sifting on,
And still the skies were gray and drear.

Then Dorothy rose from by the fire,
And put on her cloak, and her hood of red,
And, ere the drifts are any higher
I must try to find my sheep, she said.
No food have they had these three long days:
No fear for me, mother; I know all the ways;
In the blackest night I know no dread.

So she wrapped herself well, from head to toe,
And tied her hood round her winsome face,

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And shut herself out in the cold and the snow.
  And the fierce wind rushed to her embrace,
The snowflakes danced like elfin sprites
And fainter grew the window lights
  As she took her way to the feeding place.

And the night came on, and the wind blew chill,
  And the snow kept sifting down so white;
And no sweet Dorothy climbed the hill.
  The news flew out upon the night,
And torches were carried by anxious men
Who searched the hillside again and again,
  But no sweet Dorothy came in sight.

In spring a soft dimple runs down the hill,
  Too deep for a gully, and scarce a ravine,
And in the bottom a small, sparkling rill,
  Its course marked out by tenderest green:
And here, in the early springtime, they found her,
With the sheep that she sought still lying around
    her,
  Among the sparrows that come here to preen.
Oh, come, birds of springtime, bluebird and swal-
    low,
Come, little lambkins, follow, come follow,
To mourn and lament in Dorothy's Hollow!

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HANNA'S HILL.

Oh, the heat of the August sun,
And the dance of the flies and midges,
When the cattle gather one by one
To all the sheltered ridges;
When the fireflies dance as falls the night,
And the glow-worm sheds its softest light
About the river bridges:

When the great wide marsh lies black and bare,
At the time of low tide-water,
And the rushes shrink in the golden air —
Not a breath from any quarter;
When the swamp mosquitoes sharpen their bill,
And giddily dance round Hanna's Hill,
Prepared for their work of slaughter.

So do they now, so did they of yore,
So runs the ancient story —
Told for a hundred years and more,
The tale with age is hoary —
Of master and slave; and the slave ran away,
Took with him a boat, and for many a day
They found neither him nor his dory.

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Then the master said, and an oath he swore —
And he said it for all to hear him —
If the slave comes back, it shall be as before,
For not an iron shall sear him,
Nor shall he be whipped, nor have extra task;
If he will come back, it is all that I ask,
And never a lash shall come near him.

Then the slave, who had kept in hiding so well,
Heard of the words of his master;
His food was all gone, it was easy to tell
He was weakening faster and faster.
So just at eve, in the waning light,
He came back to his home as fell the night,
Thinking no thought of disaster.

Then the master laughed a laugh of glee:
It is true I will have no whipping;
We will take him out on the marsh, said he,
To cure his love of shipping, —
Out on the marsh to the little hill,
Where mosquitoes dance and sharpen their bill,
He can have a taste of their nipping.

They took him out, and stripped him bare,
And on the ground they laid him,
And left him in the warm night air,
And fast and tight they made him;
And the air was dancing with insect life,

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And he 'gainst them all waged an impotent strife,
And all night long they flayed him.

When the sun looked up from out the sea,
And sent forth golden flushes,
Silent and calm and still lay he,
Nor saw the morning blushes;
And his master's laughter was turned to dread,
When he came and found it a place of the dead,
Where the marsh flies dance in the rushes.

They dance and they dance in the August noon,
And float as light as a feather,
And all night long hum an insolent tune,
Joining in chorus together.
Men call the place to this day Hanna's Hill,
And there in the marsh they are dancing still,
Through all the summer weather.

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THE FORTUNE TELLER.

The sun sinks slowly to the west,
The twilight shadows lengthen,
The birds are chirping ere they rest,
The evening breezes strengthen;
The tall trees bend each gracious head,
Their leaves are all a quiver,
The zenith flushes gold and red,
And silent flows the river.

A maiden treads the woodland way,
Her eyes with tears run over;
She hastens on as dies the day,
Dew falls on bush and clover.
She starts at each faint woodland sound,
Her very heart a quiver;
Her feet scarce touch the mossy ground,
Her breath comes with a shiver.

Deep in the wood an old crone dwells,
An aged dame so hoary,
And all the future she foretells,
The wise old Sylvia Tory.
And to her hut at fall of night
Comes many an anxious maiden,
And many a youth in sorry plight,
To ease their hearts love-laden.

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O Sylvia Tory, tell me true,
How is my true love faring?
His good ship sails the ocean blue,
And I am most despairing.

Last night and two nights more I dreamed
I saw a wreck around him;
I saw him stand, and still it seemed
As if the sea had drowned him.

Now, peace, my child, and say no word;
Thy dreams may truly frighten.
I 'll listen well; then what I 've heard
I 'll tell, thy fears to lighten.

The autumn leaves fall one by one;
The stealthy forest creatures
Make tiny rustlings; day is done,
No eye can see their features.
The night hawk gives a startled cry,
A fox barks in the bushes;
The hornèd owl comes flapping by,
Frogs croak among the rushes.

O maiden, I hear an angry sea,
And a sound of men and laughter;
To terror turns that laugh of glee,
And a sound of pursuit comes after.

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And a ship flies away as a swallow flies,
A great hull close behind her,
And she trains her guns upon her prize,
And the fog comes up to blind her.

Then the ship is safe that my true love sails,
Oh, tell me, Sylvia Tory ?
She is safe and sound, and she prevails,
And thy lover wins great glory.

And is it past or yet to be,
Oh, tell me, Sylvia Tory ?
In three short days, as thou shalt see,
'T will be a fireside story.

Go to the sea, thou maiden fair,
With father and with brother;
Thy true love surely will be there
In two days and another.

The night was dark, the wind blew chill,
The blackness could be parted,
Yet quickly down the darksome hill
The maiden sped light-hearted.
The fireflies lit the gloomy way,
Love in her eyes was beaming;
For her the night was turned to day,
With joy the world was gleaming.

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Hurrah for king George!
Cried the Orpheus crew.
A health to our master,
We fear no disaster,
We 'll capture our prize the Wampoa.

And the little Wampoa said never a word,
But she righted her sails, and light as a bird
Over the water she flew.

A health to King George, if this prize we gain,
From the best of the wine she doth contain,
Each man shall drink to his mind!
Hurrah for the wind
That shall come up behind!
'T is little to do
To take the Wampoa.

Then a great gun came booming,
But missed wide its mark,
And the great sails were looming
Up to the dark.
On shore a hundred
Of anxious men
Watched the chase, wondered
If ever again
Could they greet their brothers
On the Wampoa.
Maidens, wives, mothers,
Wept the day through.

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Now, courage, courage, good men all,
My love I plainly see;
They all are safe, both great and small,
And soon on shore will be.

For the Captain has turned his vessel's prow,
Straight to the beach he steers;
See how she rides the proud waves now, —
She neither waves nor veers.

Hurrah! the Wampoa is beached at last!
Hurrah for the brave little craft!
The great ship Orpheus may anchor cast,
But she lies to windward a long way aft.
She may fire her guns from where she stands,
But the Wampoa is saved from the enemy's hands.

Again the firefly lights the way
In the soft autumn weather;
In woodland paths the lovers stray
Side by side together.
They wander on with close clasped hands,
And tell to each their story,
Until they come to where there stands
The house of Sylvia Tory.

Ah, dearest, I was sore dismayed
When last this way I wended;
The dreams I had made me afraid,
I thought thy days were ended.

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So thought I too, my dearest maid,
When the great Orpheus chased us ;
We were so near that we could hear
Their bold words as they faced us.

But when my heart was sick with fear
There came, like help from heaven,
Thy voice to me, from o'er the sea,
And then a mist was given.

It hid the ship, we could not see,
But then we knew the water,
And with that grace we won the race,
Nor asked for any quarter.

Now God be thanked who brought thee me
And all thy men so steady ;
Old Sylvia here will have good cheer
To find thee home already.

The twilight falls o'er wood and field
In shade and deeper shadow,
The fireflies their soft light yield
And light the open meadow ;
And love has lit within their hearts
His holy lamp undying,
Which burns with light which ne'er departs,
Though days and years are flying.

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THE CHASE OF THE ORPHEUS.

THERE was war with England, desperate news!
Along the Rhode Island shore
The great ship Orpheus kept up her cruise,
Looking for prizes of war.
From Point Judith Point to Beaver Tail
And over to Newport and back did she sail,
No matter what weather or how blew the gale,
With lookout behind and before.

'T was a stormy time. A heavy ground swell
Rolled in and broke on the coast,
And on the beaches it thundering fell,
But still she kept to her post.
And after one thick and foggy night,
Through a rift in the cloud in the dawning light,
There was the quarry, just in sight,
Faint and white as a ghost.

There, barely seen, was the Yankee craft
For which had been guarded the mouth of the Bay;
And her cargo they knew would furnish a draught
Of the best that is shipped from the Bay of Biscay.

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But how did it happen? how did she glide
Past the Orpheus watch? With the fog to hide
She had sailed up the Bay on the turn of the tide,
While becalmed the Orpheus lay.

She had passed her! The Captain shouted with rage,
And gave orders to put to the chase.
And what good luck did the Yankee engage,
For there was Newport, right in face,
Which could she gain, she was safe and sound;
Or Bristol has good harbor ground;
And the Captain vented his wrath profound,
And righted his ship for the race.

How she sailed, the gallant little brig!
She caught each breath of the morning wind
And forged ahead, while the heavier rig
Of the Orpheus slowly followed behind.
And the Captain shouted with might and main,
A health to King George if the prize we gain,
From the best of the wine she doth contain.
Each man shall choose to his mind!

Then went up a shout from fore and aft,
And the Orpheus stood with each rope hauled taut,
And each eye scanned the little craft
As the great white sails the fresh breeze caught,

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And the Yankee went staggering on in fright.
A few moments more, and with safety in sight
She turned to the left instead of the right,
  Instead of starboard to port.

What a shout the Orpheus crew did shout!
  She takes the West Passage! she's ours! they cried.
Before she makes Bristol, without a doubt
  We shall sail her down, and the prize divide.
And the chase grew hot, and the Orpheus gained;
Her guns were in order and fully trained.
She is ours! they cried; it but remained
  To near her for one broadside.

Past Little Neck Beach, past Whale Rock on the west,
  With every stitch of her canvas spread,
Past Dickens's Reef, and sailing her best,
  The gallant little Yankee fled.
But the Englishmen eyed her with satisfied eyes,
Here is Westquag Beach, they computed her size.
We are gaining fast, and will take the prize
  Off the Bonnet, they said.

When lo — Of all fools, cried the Captain then,
  Look what she is doing! No tack that last.
They will run the brig ashore, my men;
  They are going to beach her! All aghast

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They watched her plunge through the roaring
sea,
While the waves dashed round her in frantic glee,
And washed her decks, while the spray flew free,
Till her bows in the sand stuck fast.

So the brig was saved from the enemy's hand,
The brave little brig that was called the
Wampoa;
And most of the cargo was got safe to land,
Spite of all the great Orpheus could do.
For she opened fire, and blazed away,
And the Wampoa was burned on the beach, they
say,
But her cargo made merry for many a day,
While the tale was told anew.

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A BALLAD OF COLLEGE TOM.

THE iron shoes clanked on the ground,
The great bay mare stood ready, —
A Narragansett pacer she,
Whose gait was swift and steady;
And the good man came with an anxious face
And took his way to the mounting-place.

The saddle bags were fully filled,
The saddle girths drawn tighter,
Full many a mile to ride that day — .
The day could not be brighter;
But the pensive light in the good Friend's eyes
Showed him sad and tender, and true and wise.

For war and strife oppressed the land,
And want and destitution,
And pity moved the meetings all.
To take their contribution,
With Moses Brown, to Boston town,
Was the errand the good Friend started upon.

A letter to both of the chiefs he had,
Which set forth their friendly mission —
Asking their leave to pass through the lines
To succor every condition;

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But no one could tell if the scheme would succeed,
For courage, and patience, and skill there was need.

His good wife stood, as he rode off,
And watched him slowly riding;
Back to the house her young cousin turned;
The dame's sweet voice came chiding,
He has something forgot; we had better wait,
For soon he will surely be back at the gate.

And up the lane rode College Tom
With a face of loving contrition,
And tenderly kissed his waiting wife,
And started again on his mission,
With courage made strong by the love of years,
Which time improves and age endears.

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OLD CUFF.

Come, boys and girls, of the House of the Holly,
Roy, Betty, and Peggy, and Thomas and Polly,
And I 'll tell you the tale of a tail, that is jolly.

No matter what year, but a long time ago,
Quite near where you live, a boy lived I know,
A boy who loved frolic and playing in snow.
And near on the hill, where had lived Parson Torrey —
Who was doctor and minister both together,
Who helped people's souls when they really were sorry,
And went to the sick, no matter what weather —
Lived Cuff, his old slave; for in those old days
They thought it no sin to own many slaves;
And Cuff was his slave, and kept on in his ways
When his master and mistress were laid in their graves.
Such a jolly old negro, with his big mouth that smiled
Whenever he saw the face of a child,
And his eyes that were tender, and mournful, and mild.

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Well, one fine winter's day, so crisp and so cold,
Our boy saw old Cuff coming over the hill,
With a bag and a rake, and he need not be told
That the bag was for clams, to be heaped to its fill;
So he ran to the house, and laid in a lot
Of doughnuts and cookies and gingerbread hot,
With a good kiss to grandma, who said he might go,
And quickly he ran on the ice and the snow,
And then fast, and faster, and faster he ran,
And soon on the hill overtook the old man.

What fine fun they had that bright winter's day!
The clams they were plenty; a fire they made,
And such a good bake, and such merry play,
Before the hill cast an icy cold shade.
Then it grew pretty chilly, and our boy grew forlorn,
And thought it was better to be popping corn
Than be out in the evening in such freezing weather;
So quickly they climbed up the hill both together.
The old man was doubled up under his load
As they mounted the hill, and at last reached the road;
His neck was all settled down like a toad,
And his white hair stood out all over his head —
The sunset was glowing, all golden and red —
And he a black figure against the bright sky,

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With the hump on his back, and the glint in his eye,
And as the boy looked, half afraid, he grew pale,
For surely old Cuff had a long silver tail!
'T was true, 't was a tail, and the boy laughed with glee;
The jolly old negro, as loudly laughed he,
But he shifted the clams, and with a great crack
An icicle split, and fell from his back!

So this is the tale of a tail that once grew,
And Jack Frost will make another for you,
Roy, Betty, and Peggy, and Thomas and Polly,
When Christmas time comes and brings everything jolly
To boys and girls in the House of the Holly.

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ROWLAND ROBINSON'S REPENTANCE.

Bravely the ship sailed up from the south,
Bravely Point Judith she passed,
And furled her sails in the Bonnet's lee
Glad to be home at last.
And who would have guessed
Deep in her breast
Lay terror and death chained fast.

Gaily the Captain gave his commands
And shouted again and again,
Cast anchor, set watch, and then, all ashore
To see your sweethearts, my men!
But a wailing groan
And a bitter moan
Came up from the cruel slave pen.

A prosperous voyage of just thirty days
Across from the Guinea coast;
The rum was all gone, and very good trade,
Such was the proud Captain's boast.
He spoke not of the shark
That was fed after dark
And followed all day at his post.

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So in the morning the owners came down,
Well pleased with the venture were they;
The good portly planters, and young Colonel Tom,
They all had plenty to say.
Rowland Robinson, too,
Saluted the crew,
A gentleman courtly and gay.

Then the ship was towed up close to the pier —
The pier that juts out by the ferry —
While they laughed and chatted, and were debonair
And swore that a good voyage 't was — very!
Rowland Robinson gay
Was his bravest that day,
And made all the company merry.

And now the good ship was close up to the pier,
And the gentlemen gathered around,
And there she lay safely without any fear,
Her slender bow hard run aground.
And they undid the latches
And lifted the hatches,
And there rose a terrible sound.

And the light of the sun beheld the foul sight,
Close packed, between decks, there they lay,
And the only room they ever had had
Was when corpses were taken away.

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Most ghastly the sight
When seen in the light
Of the sun that shone at midday.

Weak, starving, and feeble, and quaking with fear,
Naked, unable to stand,
Half dead, and wounded, and covered with filth,
The cargo was brought to the land.
And the laugh died away,
In the company gay,
As they saw that piteous band.

Rowland Robinson swore 't was a sin and a shame;
His laughter rang gaily no more,
As he listened and looked with horrified gaze,
And worse terrors came than before;
And his curses were wild,
Then he sobbed like a child,
And his tears drowned the oaths that he swore.

And he took all his share, twenty-eight wretched souls,
And carried them home to his farm,
And had them well tended, and cured all their hurts
And kept them away from alarm.
And not one would he sell,
For he never could tell
If haply they 'd come to fresh harm.

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Such deeds in our old Narragansett were done,
  Such deeds, and few said them nay,
But those sudden tears of one honest man
  Washed some of the foul sin away.
    Rowland Robinson's name
    Is free from all shame
  For his hearty repentance that day.

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CINDERELLA.

The pumpkins are gathered,
Come, children, come,
The pumpkins are gathered
And safely brought home.
Here is the oxcart
Piled up so high
With great golden pumpkins,
Come, come, we cry!

Now they are emptied
Out on the green,
And such fine pumpkins
Never were seen!
Come and dance round them,
Come, children, come,
The pumpkins are gathered
And safely brought home.

Here is the biggest,
Roll it with care
Out on the greensward,
How round and fair!

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Here 's Dorothy ready,
And now she shall ride
Up to the palace
To be a sweet bride.

There, do you see her?
Cinderella is she,
There is her chariot
Gorgeous to see.
There are her horses —
Mice, do you know? —
See Dorothy riding;
What a fine show!

'T is only a pumpkin —
What do you say?
I see Cinderella
As plain as the day.
Come and dance round her,
Come, children, come,
The pumpkins are gathered
And safely brought home!

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WINTER.

Oh, happy was that winter day
Which bore me from the town away.
A soft gray day, with low-hung clouds
And mist that all the distance shrouds.
How sweet the wide horizon line,
The bare gray trees, the olive pine,
The swelling fields and frozen brook,
The patch of snow in sheltered nook,
And everywhere an icy lace
Covered the lovely country's face.

The rugged oaks held up their arms
  And proudly wore their shining crown,
The elm-trees shook with vague alarms,
  By glittering jewels weighted down.
The grass, the stubble of the field
  All glistened with their lovely gems,
The goldenrods ice sceptres wield,
  The ferns have crystal diadems.
And like a bride, the fair birch-tree
  Bends low beneath her pearly veil.
A widowed bride perchance is she,
  Who ever must her love bewail.
And o'er the icebound trees and plains,
Supreme a lovely silence reigns.

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O Summer, thou art prodigal,
And from thy lavish hand,
O'er all the happy land,
The many colored blossoms fall,
Till dulled with pleasure, wearied eyes
Thy bounteous beauty hardly prize.
But chary Winter with his blight
Comes soon upon thy rapid flight.
Shorn of their flaming glory
The roadsides now are hoary. [1]
He opens the mind's inner eye,
Which hidden beauties can espy.
The crown of seeds the aster bears
More starlike than the flower appears;
The tarnished red of rose hip glows
With more of beauty than the rose;
And green upon the frozen ground
The potentilla still is found.
For Winter hath the earth arrayed
As Puritan, a saintly maid
Whose sombre garments but express
Her tender grace and loveliness.

Dear Winter, lay thy cooling hand
Upon my heart, and bid it rest,
Oh, bid it stay, at thy command,
Its troubled throbbings in my breast.
The buds thou holdest will unclose,
The wealth of summer to increase.
Give me thy trustful, sweet repose,
Give me thy tranquil, holy peace.

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SONGS AND LYRICS.

"THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF BIRDS IS COME."

THE bobolink pours forth his song,
A bright melodious flood;
The tender strain of shy wood thrush
Is heard in deepest wood.
And swaying on the topmost bough
The tiny song sparrow fills
The air with his exulting song
As he with rapture thrills.
And there are larks which pierce the sky
While downward floats their lay,
And nightingales whose plaintive tones
Are heard at close of day.

But many humbler birds there are
In brown or russet coats,
Who flutter in and out the trees
And pipe their gentle notes.
Surely the summer day would miss
Something of joy and peace,
If silenced by some greater song
Their music they should cease.

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So, if no sky-descended song
  Is given unto thee,
Fear not to raise thy humble voice
  In all humility.
For each is part of one great whole,
  Then gladly bear thy part
And sing with all the might thou hast
  With melody of heart.
Lest in the splendid harmony
  With which the world doth ring,
The listening Father's ear might miss
  One note, which thou shouldst sing.

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SPRING SONG.

THERE 'S a feel of spring in the air
  And a twitter of spring-time birds,
And a breath of flowers fair,
  And a murmur of tender words.

And my heart returns to its rest,
  To its home in that heart of thine,
For there is spring at its best,
  There all its beauties shine!

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DAFFODILS.

The golden sun looks gladly down
On golden rows of daffodils;
He crowns them with his golden crown,
With golden rays each blossom fills,
And every blighting breeze he stills.

With golden trumpets in their hands,
On pliant stems they lightly swing,
In cheerful, dauntless, gorgeous bands,
Their trumpets to the breeze they fling,
And sound the overture to Spring.

Gone is the winter's dreaded power,
Gone are the cold and weary days,
Now comes the soul-refreshing shower,
Now sheds the sun his brightest rays,
Their golden trumps are tuned to praise.

Praise Him, ye trumpeters of Spring
Whose mighty love new life distills.
My heart shall with your music ring,
Until your rapture through me thrills,
Ye golden-throated daffodils!

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LUPINES.

THERE was a field so covered o'er with flowers
The sight thereof did make most glad the heart.
Blue were they, but with many a different hue
Of purple, pink, and amethyst combined
With skill no painter's art may know.
There stood they waving in the soft June air
And flung their banners to the breeze, and plowed
Their sea of azure with their rosy keels.

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RUE AND ROSES.

RUE and roses, is it so,
Where roses blossom, must rue grow,
And shade the roses, as they blow?

The roses spread their lovely sheen
Upon the swelling meadow's green,
And light the fields, with joy serene.

But in their midst there stands the rue,
With saddened mien and ashen hue,
And reaches up into the blue.

Rue and roses, must it be,
May not the roses blossom free,
And joy in sunshine perfectly?

Ah, no, for joy is one with pain —
They both must follow in love's train,
And where one comes, they both remain.

So long as love and sorrow meet,
So long must rue and roses sweet
Together bloom to be complete.

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THE SABBATIA.

Dear flower that standest in the sedgy grass
  Serenely looking upward to the sky,
Thy petals stirred by all the winds that pass,
  Thy fragrance wafted by them far and nigh;

Thou art to me the joy of summer's prime,
  The gem, the garland of the leafy year,
The sun rejoices in thy blooming time
  And counts each moment he beholds thee dear.

Pale, tender flower of the Sabbath day,
  The summer days are Sabbaths all to thee;
Thy slender buds of hope pursue their way
  Ascending still to blossom perfectly.

  Thy perfect joy and peace my soul run o'er;
  And gazing on thee, still I gaze the more.

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THE SAUGATUCKET.

AFLOAT between a world of sky
And mirrored sky below;
One where the varied trees wave high,
And one where lilies blow;

Where leads a passage through a bower
A silvery waterway,
Shadowed and gemmed with many a flower
And fern of rarest spray —

A summer day, with golden air,
A dear friend tried and true, —
Afloat between two worlds so fair,
What more can this world do?

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THE CORN IS IN TASSEL.

THE corn is in tassel, and each tufted plume
  Nods and bows low to his neighbor;
The cornstalks are waving through acres of bloom,
  Each leaf is a Saladin's sabre
Which cuts the sweet air with a soft rustling sound,
And shakes the light blossom-dust down to the ground.

The corn is in tassel; the hot August sun
  Looks down on his work and rejoices,
Low on the ground golden pumpkin vines run,
  The gay birds have muffled their voices.
With heat and with silence comes glad harvest time,
The corn is in tassel, the year at its prime.

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THE HUSKING.

THE golden ears lie piled up high
  Tossed down with shout and laughter;
The sun shines golden in the sky
  And gilds each massive rafter.
The red leaves softly flutter by
And join in dances far and nigh.

Ho! lads and merry maidens all,
  This ends the work of summer;
Break down each rustling cornstalk tall
  And welcome this new comer —
This autumn wind, which makes leaves fall,
And crowns the year with festival.

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THE CLOSED GENTIAN.

I FOUND a flower, deep in shade,
  But struggling outward toward the light;
The leaves about a bower made,
  And almost hid it from my sight.

But it, alas, was blind; nor knew
  The beauty of its resting place,
The busy feet of travel flew
  Close by; it heeded not their race.

But though it saw nor sun, nor sky,
  In calm content it sweetly grew.
The tender sky looked down, drew nigh
  And steeped it in its own pure blue.

I too am blind, poor flower, like thee;
Like thee, may Heaven shine in me.

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A LATE-BLOOMING EVENING PRIMROSE.

THOU art not fair, and tall, and straight,
As all thy summer sisters were
Who bloomed in sunshine; thou too late
Must feel the cold wind's frosty stir.

Beside thee moans the angry sea,
The salt spray dashes on thy cheek;
The cold gray sky looks down on thee;
Thy bed itself is hard and bleak.

Yet crouched within thy sheltered nook
Undimmed thy golden petals are,
So sweet and bright thy gladsome look
Thou shinest like an earthly star,
Whose cheerful gleam makes bright the night
Of dull gray cloud, and autumn blight.

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ASTERS.

Fair starry eyes,
A firmament by roadside and by field,
What vision makes you sweetly wise?
What to you is revealed?

Fair starry eyes,
The golden sun still shines with ardent rays;
But soon come winter's chill surprise
And melancholy days.

Fair starry eyes,
Do ye then know the law that all must learn,
That out from death new life shall rise,
That summer must return?

Fair starry eyes,
With tranquil gaze, spread your good news afar;
In your sweet eyes all wisdom lies,
Ye blossoms of the star.

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DISAPPEARANCE.

A STATELY ship sailed brave and free
Upon the sparkling summer sea,
The light winds blew caressingly.

The same winds blew a summer cloud,
Soft, white and warm, a lovely shroud,
Enfolding waves that were too proud.

On came the ship; the cloud she cleft:
It parted, then like one bereft
Closed over all; no sea was left.

A moment still the spotless sails
Are bright with sunshine, naught avails;
She hastens on, till all sight fails.

Gone, gone, we say, and draw a sigh.
What! gone? my spirit makes reply,
Because we see not, you and I?

Who knows her new and vast expanse
Of sunlit sea, where wavelets dance
And stars are aiding her advance.

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If we but see with eyes of faith,
If we could hear, the Spirit saith
The sea is life, the cloud is death.

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SUN AND WIND.

THE great forge is idle,
The fire burns low.
Blow, wind of heaven, blow, fiercely blow,
Until dying embers
Are once more aglow.

The white hand is idle,
The sad heart is cold.
Shine, sun of heaven, shine, sun of gold,
Cold hands and bosoms
In thy warmth enfold.

Sad heart, awaken,
White hand, be strong!
Shine, sun of heaven, banish all wrong.
Blow, wind of autumn,
Break forth in song!

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THE BUTTERFLY.

Fly, Sweet, from flower to flower,
And take thy fill of pleasure
From out the chalice treasure,
The golden honey mart.

Drink, Sweet, the happy flower
Awaits thy coming, flinging
Its petals wide, and swinging
In joyousness of heart.

Stay, Sweet, though other flowers
Their fairest blossom show thee,
I, only I, can know thee
The Psyche that thou art!

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A SOUTH SEA SONG.

Balmy breath from azure sky,
  Blowing in such gentle gales
  Making us with swelling sails
Over opal ocean fly;

Blow through me, so pure and strong,
  Fill my waiting spirit's sails,
  Sweep my heartstrings with your gales
Till they shall give forth a song!

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THE CHEROKEE ROSE.

BENEATH a burning summer sky
A queenly flower proudly grows,
And flings its branches far and high,
The sweet perfection of a rose.

The petals five are white as snow,
Like orient pearls their lustre fair
The crowded golden stamens grow
Within this cup of beauty rare.

And far, and faint, and sweet its breath,
A shadow, phantom of perfume;
Too faint for life, too sweet for death,
The fragrance pale as in the bloom.

Fair southern flower! did the sun
Blanch thy pale cheek with ardent gaze,
Then weave thee for the love he won
Thy golden crown from his own rays?

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SOUTHERN PINES.

Oh, for the hand to catch and bind
The mystic wailings of the wind,
And weave them into harmonies,
Which like æolian melodies
Are made of light, and sun, and air,
And breathe of all things pure and fair.

How still the wood! No faintest sound
Breaks in upon the charmëd ground.
The reverend pines in silence all
Stretch toward the sky; and great and small
Upon their summits tapers bear,
As if to light some minster fair.
And the calm sun, from out the blue
Pierces the pine tops through and through,
Till every needle gleams with gold,
And on the ground lie gems untold.
Filled with delight, I breathe a sigh,
The answering pine-trees make reply,
A far-off sigh of sweet repose,
A breath, that softly comes and goes.
Again, again, that sigh I hear,
Far, far away, then drawing near

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With added strength it rolls along;
The sigh becomes a mighty song.
Louder and louder swells the strain,
More rich and full, the deep refrain,
Until the tumult of the sea
Is added to this minstrelsy.

Then softer grown, a wailing moan,
Tells it is gone, and I alone.

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THE WINE-PRESS.

Within an ancient vineyard
A lonely wine-press stands;
Its beams are rough and knotted,
'T is bound with rusted bands.
Above it, in the treetops
Where sky and leaflets meet,
Where softly play the zephyrs,
The birds their songs repeat.
Around with clasping tendrils
There hangs the blooming vine;
Or in the golden autumn
The clusters rich with wine.
Of all the press takes tribute, —
The grapes, the sun, the air,
The cooling winds that fan it, —
To make the wine more rare.
And some who taste this vintage
Say that the wine is strong,
And go their way rejoicing
With triumph, and with song.
And some say 't is most bitter,
And quaff it with a groan,
And take their onward journey
With many a sigh and moan.

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For each the wine has flavors,
  For each one, what he wills:
To joy it adds its sweetness,
  Its bitterness to ills.

And wouldst thou taste this vintage
  With power to curse or bless?
The wide world is the vineyard,
  And thine own heart the press.

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OPALS.

Why shouldst thou distrust my gift,
Although opal be its name?
Thou shalt not when I gently lift
All the veils that hide its flame
And show the glories it may claim.

Its descent is very high, —
From the flood, when long ago
The bow of promise arched the sky;
And still it lives, that first great bow,
In fragments which as opals glow.

For see, there is an emerald light
Of springtime hope the lovely hue,
The sea hath not a tint more bright;
And then there comes a sapphire blue,
And glowing red enfolds the two.

Triune these opals are, they mean
Three holy things which live above:
A fervent hope shines in the green,
And constancy the blue will prove,
And red the heart burns, for 't is love.

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MOMENS MUSICALE.

(SCHUBERT NO. 4.)

In minor tones the questioning begins,
With solemn iteration; while the bass
Forever rises, seeking for its place,
Like to some troubled soul, confessing sins.
Forever treading in one round, there come
The questions why, and wherefore, and from whence,
With glimpses of a vague magnificence,
As the glad major leads the minor home.
Rising and falling, still the theme repeats
Its questions unto thee, my listening heart —
Answer the music, tell it what thou art;
Here aspiration all thy thought completes.

It is coming, it is coming,
Dost thou hear it, is it spirit?
Through the twilight, in the gloaming
It is roaming.

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Ah, the answer, — do not palter.
It comes singing, it comes ringing,
Tell thy secret, do not falter;
Can'st thou alter?

Then in silence dies the answer,
All the singing hushed in sadness;
Such deep joy could not be lasting.
And with solemn iteration
Come again the urgent questions,
Questions why, and whence, and whither,
Who can answer, who can fathom?
Till at last, with wistful pauses
All the music proudly gathers,
Chaunts its song in softest murmur,
And becomes a mighty silence, —
Silence, which is not despairing,
Silence, with a minor echo,
Silence, which is near content.

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EAST AND WEST.

Was I awake, or dreaming?
And was I east, or west?
And which was only seeming —
Which real, and which but guessed?

The dawn with rosy flushes
Bathes the Atlantic shore,
The maples are all blushes,
The oaks are brown and hoar.

And in the autumn morning
Rises the village spire,
And hails the earth adorning
Herself in robes of fire.

Six solemn strokes sonorous,
The clock the hour tells,
And suddenly a chorus
Of silver Mission bells.

The sweet bells of the Mission
Of Santa Barbara fair
Ring in the glad fruition
And call to morning prayer.

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'T was matin bells that sounded
In air as soft as balm,
And through live-oaks resounded
And roused Pacific's calm.

Was I awake, or dreaming?
And was I East, or West?
And which was only seeming,
Which real, and which but guessed?

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SANTA BARBARA.

SWEET Saint, we know thee as thou art
  By Raphael's genius given us;
Thou standest on the clouds apart
  While Heaven opens glorious,
And seraph heads with eager gaze
Break through the sky with songs of praise
  Around the Virgin and the Child.
And still thou dost not dare to raise
  Thy prayerful eyes, but meek and mild,
  Thou holy maiden undefiled,
While Heaven's glories are unfurled
Dost bring the adoration of the world.

Thy shrine is on the western sea,
  Begirt with rugged mountains round;
Broad browed it looks far down the lea
  And basks in silent peace profound
Of days of perfect sun and light
Which make the earth and heaven unite,
  While blossoms garland all the year.
And as each day breaks from the night

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Three times three strokes thy bell rings clear —
O Father, Son, and Spirit hear!
'T is thine while heaven is unfurled
To bring the adoration of the world.

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THE CHURCH-YARD.

(SANTA BARBARA.)

OH peace profound!
Within the wall's enclosing circuit
Forever reigns eternal silence.
No sound to break the perfect stillness,
Save the soft notes of gratulation
The cooing doves together murmur;
Or the swift flapping of their pinions
As down they come from Mission towers.
Here grows the cypress, ever mourning,
And here a stretch of waving grasses,
With tender springtime flowers commingled.
And here the pepper trees low drooping,
And there, against the Mission buttress,
An olive-tree of softest color
Bends low o'er San Antonio's chapel.
Few graves there are, and little tended,
But high against the wall there clamber
Green ivy, and the strong rose bushes,
Whereon the roses now are blooming,
Pale roses, each a double handful,
And soft pink roses, full of sweetness.

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And over all rise up the towers —
The towers crowned with holy crosses —
And far beyond the wall that bounds us,
The blue and purple sea outstretches,
Far — far — illimitable distance!
Oh perfect stillness, mighty silence,
Truly here the dead are blessed;
Here where roses bloom above them,
And the doves alone give utterance
To the peace that fills the air.

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THE CLOSED GATE.

(SANTA BARBARA.)

BESIDE the Mission wall the highway runs;
The horsemen gaily pass it every day,
And children stop beneath its shade to play —
Brown faced from tropic suns.

And just beyond the shady sycamore
There is a sudden angle in the wall,
With pediment, and cross to crown it all,
Above a fast-closed door.

Without — the stir of life, within — the gloom
Of solemn cypress, with its sombre green,
And tender weeping willows can be seen,
That grow above the tomb.

The wall is high and strong; the gate closed fast;
The masonry shows white against the moss;
And over all still stands the stone carved cross,
To tell us of the past.

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Thou fast closed gate of death — or of new life,
We knock in vain ; immovable thou art ;
In vain the clamor of a breaking heart,
In vain our eager strife.

But for each one sometime thy fast closed door
Will open softly ; all shall see that day ;
Beneath thy cross-crowned arch, there lies the way
To life forevermore.

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BEFORE MINE EYES.

BEFORE mine eyes are sea and sky,
And from the sea, a mountain high
  Bathed in the softest silver light;
  The sun's great shield so dazzling bright
Upon the tranquil sea doth lie.

Such radiant gems I there descry
Nor Emperors nor Queens may buy;
  They shine like flashing stars of night
    Before mine eyes.

Oh mountain, soft as clouds that fly,
Oh clouds, 'twixt heaven and earth that ply,
  And sea of silver, shorn of might
  By peaceful sky; most blessed sight
To soothe, to cheer, to fortify
    Before mine eyes.

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SANTA CRUZ.

An island stands in the Western Sea,
The Western Sea, with the peaceful name,
Where the lights are silver and darks are blue,
And no two lights are ever the same.
Where with dazzling white the great waves break,
And the path of the sun leaves a golden wake
Down which the saints in glory walk,
From the heaven above to the heaven of thought.
And the island raises its silver crest
Far above this sea of the West.

Were they godly men, or mere buccaneers
Who gave the island its holy name,
Who called aloud in their craven fears
When the winds were fierce, and the heavens aflame,
When the sea was wild, and man's heart faints,
And they crossed themselves and called on the saints?

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Then Santa Rosa heard their cry,
And Santa Barbara hastened nigh.
And the great archangel San Miguel,
With his mighty sword came down to quell
The raging storm, as the dragon of old,
And guided the ship to a peaceful fold,
To a sheltered spot beneath the lee
Of the isle that stands in the Western sea.

There stands the isle in the Western Sea,
  The island that bears the holy name,
And raises its head so peacefully
  In storm and sunshine still the same.
It stands far out in the Western sky,
The clouds about it gather nigh,
And light it up at even song
With colors that to heaven belong.
Far, far out in the Western sea
Its mountains stand immovably;
It suffers neither change nor loss,
It has the peace of the Holy Cross.

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THE FAR-OFF LAND.

A PERFECT day, with clear, unclouded skies,
And mountains piled up softly, fold on fold,
And meadows basking in the sunshine's gold,
And blossoms tinted with a hundred dyes.
Beyond the sea more mountain peaks arise,
Fair Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa bold,
And in the far-off distance I behold
San Miguel stand, before my wondering eyes.

So to the inner sight some days there come
Of perfect vision, when to earnest prayer
Is granted some brief glimpse of our true home.
Then come the fogs and mists that cloud our faith
And roll across the ocean we call death,
To hide the land we know is shining there.

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ART AND NATURE.

"God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him."

I.

From out the fullness of the universe,
The earth, the sunshine and the air distill
The tender forms of plants; each to fulfill
Its perfect being and again disperse
Its beauty; as if each blossom would rehearse
Its Maker's glory and adore His skill
Who giveth it a body at His will
And in His radiance would itself immerse.

And to some souls He gives this God-like power:
The world in beauty spreads before their eyes
With color, form, and sound for royal dower.
It still lies lifeless, till some loving heart
Creates a body for it with his art.
Behold a wonder — man the life supplies.

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II.

For by the subtile alchemy of art
The elemental beauties that exist —
The light, the shade, the ruby, amethyst,
The glowing glories that at evening start,
The mountain summits and the ocean's part,
When by the sunbeam they are softly kissed;
All these and more — the artist alchemist
Transforms by fusion with the human heart.

For lo, he grasps the spirit of the whole,
The hidden beauty, truth without alloy;
Nature surprised reveals to him her soul.
The spirit takes on substance, dons the dress
The hand provides its beauty to express;
Henceforth a permanent embodied joy.

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BEMERTON RECTORY.

I STOOD sometime within that tiny room
  Where thou, most saintly Herbert, oft didst write,
  Where thou didst "relish versing" and indite
That fragrant wreath of poesy whose bloom
Was for thy King; whose subtle sweet perfume
  Like floating incense still preserves its might.
  Here were thy singing robes kept out of sight
And here thy spirit rose on worship's plume.

And then I trod thy verdant lawn to where
  The river flows with peaceful placid wave;
And thine eyes saw it flow, thine eyes of prayer
  In whose clear depths there was that fount of song
  Which still flows as this stream, though thou art gone;
And here the weary come their hearts to lave.

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THE ISLES OF THE SIRENS.

SPECTRAL, and wrapped in fleecy mist
The Isles of the Sirens lay,
'Twixt a sea of emerald and amethyst,
And clouds that were opal and gray.

And Tragara looked from out the blue
And lifted her ancient head
To see the course of the toiling crew
As on the sailors sped.

For a galleon hold the islands seemed,
Pointed straight out to sea
To sail a sea that the poet dreamed,
Which tugged at her chains to be free.

Yet forever chained the islands lie,
No galleon mate they find;
So the sirens are luring ceaselessly,
Their song fills the breath of the wind.

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Ulysses heard that siren song,
  And sailed by, bound to his mast,
And down to us through the centuries long
  It sounds ever new from the past.

The wail of the sea, the sigh of the wind,
  The vastness of man's desires,
The thoughts too wide for the human mind,
  These feed the song's quick fires.

And the islands shift in the moving light,
  And sway with the song's increase,
As a galleon tugs with all her might
  And longs for a glad release.

And the song is sung as of old to-day
  And tries each human soul;
Tragara stands calm on her headland gray,
  And the deep sea holds the whole.

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IN EXILE.

A SHINING stretch of wind-swept beach,
With sand dunes girt about,
And piping birds just out of reach
Where waves dance in and out,

With bluest sky arched overhead
Reflected in wet sand,
And bluest sea before it spread,
Bound fast with rocky band.

A languid river slowly glides
With the soft Indian name,
With current flowing with the tides
Or north or south the same;

And Cormorant to guard it lies
Black, rising from the sea,
With foam about it girdle-wise,
What is it all to me?

On every coast are beaches fair,
And rocks in plenty stand,
But ah, they bask not in the air
Of Narragansett land!

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LYRIC INVOCATION.

GREAT gift of God, harmonious sound,
  Descend and fill these virgin walls;
Here breathe on us thy peace profound;
Here lift us by thy mystic spell
To heaven's gate where thou dost dwell;
  Here rouse us by thy trumpet calls.
Break through the bonds of time and sense
  And waft the spirit far from hence.

Come in soft melodious measure,
Give grateful rest and tranquil pleasure.
With even movement gladly show
The path where steadfast youth should go.
Enkindle aspiration here
To lead us to a higher sphere.

Great gift of God, harmonious sound,
  Descend and fill these virgin walls;
Here breathe on us thy peace profound;
  Here rouse us by thy trumpet calls.

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THE WESTERN LAND.

GREAT Western Land whose mighty breast
Between two oceans finds its rest,
Begirt with storm on either side,
And washed by strong Pacific tide;
The knowledge of thy wondrous birth
Gave balance to the rounded earth,
In sea of darkness thou didst stand
Now first in light, my Western Land.

In thee the olive and the vine
Unite with hemlock and with pine;
In purest white the Southern rose
Repeats the spotless Northern snows;
Around thy zone the belt of maize
Rejoices in the sun's hot rays,
And all that Nature could command
She heaped on thee, my Western Land.

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My Western Land, whose touch makes free,
Advance to perfect liberty!
Till right shall make thy sovereign might
And every wrong be crushed from sight.
Behold thy day, thy time is here,
Thy people great, with naught to fear,
God hold thee in His strong right hand,
My well beloved Western Land.

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RHODE ISLAND'S GIFT.

Read at the celebration of Rhode Island Day, World's Columbian Exhibition, October 5, 1893.

LAST of the thirteen, smallest of them all,
What canst thou bring to this World's Festival,
Where all thy sisters come in pride and power
And bring each one a Princess' generous dower
Of gold and gems, and fruits, and precious woods,
And joyous tribute of their costly goods?

The wild Atlantic beats thy shore,
The fleecy sea fog folds thee round,
Point Judith counts its wrecks by score,
Where stately ships their graves have found.
The Seekonk takes its shining way
Past swelling hills of tender green,
To where the waters of the bay
Bask softly in their silver sheen.
So small a State that it is true
From any top of highest hill,
Another State still comes to view
To give the gazing eye its fill.

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What can we bring? No outward show of gain,
No pomp of state; we bring the sons of men!
The man who lived two centuries ago
In persecutions which set hearts aglow,
Who dared to say, when everywhere world-wide
Men made belief and state-craft coincide,
"We have no law to punish or disperse
Those who express their faith in ways diverse;"
Successors to that man full well may dare
To claim they are a prophet's lawful heir.
These many years to us there have not failed
Some lofty spirits with whom truth prevailed,
Who stood for right, the high, the ideal things
Until this freedom with its healing wings
Spread over all the land, and now the whole
From East to West has the Rhode Island soul.

Bring gold, fair sisters, yellow gold
And gems, and all that 's fair and fine,
And heap them all, the new, the old,
Before our country's stately shrine.
Bring hardihood from north and east,
Bring beauty from the south and west,
Bring valor to adorn the feast,
Bring all that has withstood time's test.
We grudge you not the riches rare,
We grudge you not your acres broad;
We bring you for our noble share
The liberty to worship God.

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